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# MESSAGE

**UNDERSECRETARY CESAR M. DRILON, JR.**

*Undersecretary for Fisheries  
Department of Agriculture  
Philippines*

Good afternoon. It is really good that this Consultation is held here in Bohol because Manila is experiencing heavy rains right now. Bohol is a beautiful place and reports say that it is now the number one tourist destination in the country, but people in Panay would like to disagree this because we still believe it's Boracay.

I am happy to note of the response of the member countries of SEAFDEC and other organizations to the call of the Aquaculture Department for the development of the Regional Code of Practice for Responsible Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems. Just to recall, ASEAN and SEAFDEC member countries realizing the contribution of the shrimp industry to the region's economy, implemented in 1999 the project on the Promotion of Mangrove-Friendly Aquaculture in Southeast Asia. The project is under the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group (FCG) collaborative mechanism.

It is worth mentioning that Japan has been very supportive of the projects of SEAFDEC and still continue to provide financial assistance through the Government of Japan Trust Fund Program of its Fishery Agency. During the 22<sup>nd</sup> SEAFDEC Program Committee in 1999, it was recommended that AQD refocus this collaborative project to emphasize on mangrove-friendly shrimp culture. Thus, the revised framework of the project was approved during the 32<sup>nd</sup> SEAFDEC Council Meeting, hence the implementation of the Mangrove-Friendly Shrimp Culture Project. The project has four major activities, verification and pilot demonstration, research, training, and information dissemination.

SEAFDEC has been implementing the project on the Regionalization of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries that focuses on regionalizing the global FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries in order to make the global Code applicable in this region. Thus, the SEAFDEC Aquaculture Department was tasked to regionalize the Technical Guidelines for Aquaculture Development of the global Code, the output of which, is the Regional Guidelines for Responsible Fisheries in Southeast Asia: Responsible Aquaculture which was published in 2001. This Regional Guidelines call for the need to develop the Regional Code of Practice for Responsible Aquaculture in Mangrove Areas.

It must be recalled that the approval by the SEAFDEC Council of the Resolution on the SEAFDEC Strategic Plan led to the forging of the collaboration between SEAFDEC and ASEAN through the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Fisheries Consultative Group. The SEAFDEC Strategic Plan stipulates the need for SEAFDEC and ASEAN to work together in order that mutual benefits could be derived from the member countries. The Mangrove-Friendly Shrimp Culture Project is one of the projects under the FCG collaborative mechanism.

The implementation of projects with regional focus was enhanced during the ASEAN-SEAFDEC Conference on Sustainable Fisheries for Food Security in the New Millennium: "Fish for the people" in November 2001. Its output includes among others, the Resolution and Plan of Action on Responsible Fisheries for Food Security for the ASEAN Region, thus the implementation of aquaculture projects in a responsible and sustainable manner. Many developments followed after the Millennium Conference, and in all conferences, the need to conduct aquaculture in an environment-friendly manner has always been emphasized.

We are here in Tagbilaran City, the island of Bohol to make sure that our shrimp aquaculture is not in contradiction with the conservation of our mangroves, and taking note that shrimp aquaculture has been alleged to have led the massive destruction of mangroves in this region. True or not we still cannot confirm. But this time, let us make sure that our shrimp aquaculture should be friendly to the mangrove ecosystems and the environment. I hope for the success of this Consultation. My special gratitude to the Government of Japan for its continued support in this project.

# MESSAGE

## MR. JUNICHIRO OKAMOTO

*Deputy Secretary General  
SEAFDEC Secretariat*

The Undersecretary of Department of Agriculture, Mr. Cesar Drilon; Jr., Representatives from JIRCAS, UNESCO, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region VII and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources-VII, distinguished guests and participants; my colleagues; ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed an honor for me to offer some words on this occasion of the opening of this Regional Technical Consultation for Code of Practice for Responsible Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystems in Southeast Asia.

As it is widely recognized, aquaculture has been playing very important and various roles in the national economic development in Southeast Asia such as increasing fisheries production, rural development, rectification of poverty, creation of employment and so on. Among the aquaculture, shrimp aquaculture is said to be one of most successful sub-sectors in the region. However, when we recall the history of development in shrimp aquaculture, this important sub-sector of aquaculture had faced serious criticism raised by international environmental groups, because some destructive practices such as demolishing mangrove forestry were sometimes reported in the progress of development and expansion of aquaculture in the region.

Although most losses of the mangrove forestry in the region cannot be solely attributed to aquaculture development, it was recognized that there is a need to appropriately address this criticism. It is therefore important to come up with a Regional Code for this region that could address increased production with focus to some extent on international market, as well as for sustainable development of aquaculture co-existing with local coastal communities where food supply and livelihood rely on healthy environmental ecosystems.

In this connection, SEAFDEC/AQD in collaboration with Thailand as the lead country for the ASEAN started the Project on the Promotion of Mangrove-Friendly Aquaculture in 1999 under the auspices of the Japanese Trust Fund Scheme. Since then, SEAFDEC has implemented various research activities under this project, and has accumulated useful knowledge and information for promoting mangrove-friendly aquaculture, especially shrimp aquaculture. SEAFDEC has already obtained many useful information, knowledge and technologies to promote mangrove-friendly shrimp aquaculture technology in the region.

This year 2004 is the last year of the project, and we have to put together various outcomes into the results of the Project. I believe that the proposed “Code of Practice for Responsible Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystem in Southeast Asia” which will be deliberated in this Technical Consultation must be one of final fruits of the Project to guide the people who engage in aquaculture especially in shrimp culture as well as the aquaculture policy managers in their plans and programs.

Regarding responsible aquaculture, SEAFDEC has already developed the “Regional Guidelines for Responsible Aquaculture in Southeast Asia” in cooperation with SEAFDEC member countries and relevant institutions in 2001. Thus, the proposed “Code of Practice for Responsible Aquaculture in Mangrove Ecosystem in Southeast Asia” may be placed in specific part of “Regional Guideline for Responsible Aquaculture in Southeast Asia”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I understand that the major purpose of this Regional Technical Consultation lies in reviewing the outcomes of research done by the project in the past as well as deliberation of draft of “Code of Practice” because the Code should be endorsed by scientific and rational evidence in order for stakeholders to understand the value of proposed “Code of Practice”.

I would like you to carefully deliberate and constructively contribute to the finalization of the proposed “Code”, because once officially adopted, the “Code” would be a kind of regional guideline to SEAFDEC and ASEAN member countries.

Lastly, I wish to declare the Consultation open and wish for the success of the Regional Technical Consultation.